1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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776 821 It is along the rainbow that the spirits travel when they visit the earth. It is necessary to correct a statement by Mr Portman on this matter. In connection with the *Aka-Bea* word for the rainbow, *pidga-l'ar-čauga*, he says "The root *pidga* (a rainbow) must not be confounded with the root *pidga* 'a cane' or 'rattan.' The Andamanese have certain legends regarding the uses of the rainbow, and these have been hitherto understood as referring to 'canes.' *Pidga-l'ar-čauga* means 'the rainbow (bridge) by which the spirits (cross)'[1]." Mr Portman is in error. The word *pidga* means "cane" and the whole word means "the cane of the spirits." It is the whole word that is the name of the rainbow, and not the word *pidga*. An exactly similar compound name for the rainbow exists in each of the languages of the Great Andaman. The name of the particular species of large cane varies, being *pidga* in *Aka-Bea*, *peta* in *A-Pučikwar*, *pir* in *Aka-Jeru*, and so on. Apart from the fact that the natives themselves say that the rainbow is a "cane," Mr Portman would have us believe that in each of the different languages there are two exactly similar words, different in the different languages, one of which means "cane" and the other "rainbow," while there is no connection between the words. Thus *Aka-Bea* would have *pidga* meaning "a kind of cane" and *pidga* meaning "a rainbow." *Aka-Jeru* would have *pir* meaning "cane" and *pir* meaning "rainbow."

The rainbow is generally regarded as an evil omen, being believed to be a precursor of sickness. One *Aka-Jeru* statement is that it is made by a being called *Tolitoŋ* and that when it appears somebody will be ill.

776 823 The only explanation of the tides that I heard was to the effect that they are caused by a fish, a species of *Tetrodon*, called *čolmo* in *Aka-Jeru* and *pit* in *Aka-Kede*, which drinks up the water and then lets it out again.

The Andaman Islands are occasionally visited by earthquakes. An *Aka-Kede* account of how earthquakes are caused is that when a man dies he goes to the spirit world which is beneath the earth. The spirits hold a ceremony. My informant spoke of the ceremony as *Kimil*, which is the name of the

[1] Portman, *Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman*, p. 328.

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initiation ceremonies. At this ceremony they have a dance similar to the peace-making dance described in the last chapter, but instead of erecting a screen such as is used in that ceremony, they make use of the rainbow. As they shake the rainbow in dancing this causes earthquakes. The ceremony which newly-arrived spirits have to undergo in the world after death is a *pǫrǫto kimil*, i.e., the initiate eats *pǫrǫto* (*Caryota sobolifera*).

Among the most important of the Andamanese beliefs are those relating to the weather and the seasons. These are under the control of two beings named *Biliku*, *Bilik* or *Puluga*, and *Tarai*, *Teriya*, or *Daria*. There are a certain number of points in which the statements of one informant may differ from those of another in connection with these two mythical beings, but there are also a certain number of points on which there is absolute unanimity in all the tribes of the Great Andaman.

The first belief in which there is entire unanimity is that of the connection of *Biliku* and *Tarai* with the two chief winds that are known in the Andamans. *Biliku* lives in the north-east and is connected with the north-east monsoon. *Tarai* lives in the south-west and is connected with the south-west monsoon. The connection is shown in the names of these winds, which are as follows:—

Language	N. E. Wind	S. W. Wind
Aka-Cari, *Aka-Bo*, *Aka-Kora*, *Aka-Jeru*	*Biliku boto*	*Tarai boto*
Oko-Juwoi, *Aka-Kol* and *A-Pucikwar*	*Bilik to*	*Teriya*
Akar-Bale	*Puluga toa*	*Daria*
Aka-Bea	*Puluga ta*	*Deria*

In the Northern tribes the word *bǫto* means "wind." *Biliku bǫto* must be translated "the *Biliku* wind," and *Tarai bǫto* is similarly "the *Tarai* wind." It would be incorrect to translate the name *Biliku bǫto* as "the wind of *Biliku*," for this would be rendered in *Aka-Jeru* by *Biliku ičo bǫto*. In *A-Pučikwar* the south-west wind is called *Teriya* simply, the name of the mythical being connected with the wind being used as the name of the wind itself, just as is the case with the name *Ele* (lightning). On the other hand the north-east wind is called not *Bilik* but *Bilik to*. The same thing occurs also in the *Akar-Bale* and *Aka-Bea* languages.

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a piece of the *Anadendron paniculatum* and diving with it into the sea where he placed it under a rock on the reef. A more recent example is very similar. A man still living, named *Jiře Pilečar*, who was, in a way, the successor of the man formerly mentioned, is said to have stopped a violent storm by using the leaves and bark of the *Ficus laccifera* in the same way, that is by crushing them and placing them under a rock in the sea. In both these cases it would seem that the rite was directed not against *Biliku* and *Tarai*, but against the *Jurua*.

Apart from his power to communicate directly with the spirits, the *oko-jumu* owes his position to a superior knowledge of the magical properties of common substances and objects. This knowledge he is supposed to obtain from the spirits. However, a lesser degree of knowledge on such matters is possessed by everybody. Thus in the treatment of sickness there are a number of magical remedies of which anyone can make use without consulting an *oko-jumu*.

A complete enumeration of all the things that are believed to possess magical properties is, of course, not possible, but the following notes refer to all the most important.

We may consider first of all the magical properties of mineral substances. One of the most important of these is red ochre. Yellow ochre, which is found in pockets in many parts of the islands, is collected and burnt, when it turns red, and the powder so obtained is either used by itself or is made into a paint with pig or turtle fat. The powder is mixed with water and taken internally. Red paint is applied to the throat and chest for coughs and colds and sore throats, and round the ear for ear-ache. When a man feels unwell he often smears red paint on his upper lip just below his nostrils. In this way, the natives say, the "smell" of the paint cures his sickness. The paint is sometimes used as a dressing for wounds or centipede bites. Its use for ornamenting the body on ceremonial occasions has already been noted in the last chapter.

In the North Andaman a soft red stone is found, called *talar*. This is used as a substitute for red paint. It is rubbed on the body, or it is powdered and the powder is mixed with water and taken internally.

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White clay (*tȯl-odu* in *Aka-Jeru*) is sometimes used medicinally, both externally and internally. The commoner clay (*odu* in *Aka-Jeru*) is plastered on sores, and has the effect of keeping off flies, if it does nothing else.

An olive-coloured earth (called *čulya* in *Aka-Bea*), found in certain springs, is prized as a remedy. It is mixed with water and taken internally as a general remedy for all sorts of complaints.

Turning now to the magical properties of vegetable substances, there are a large number of these, and some of them have not been botanically identified.

The *Anadendron paniculatum* is a plant from which the Andamanese obtain a valuable fibre, which they use for their bow-strings, and for thread with which to make their arrows and harpoons. A number of magical properties are attributed to this plant. Rheumatism is supposed to be due to the "smell" of the plant getting into the system when the fibre is being prepared[1]. The "smell" of the green plant, or of the fibre until it has been thoroughly dried for some days, is believed to frighten away turtle. A man who has been preparing the fibre would not dream of joining a turtle-hunting expedition, for his presence in the canoe would be sufficient to drive away all the turtle. A turtle-hunting expedition would be a failure if a piece of the green creeper were in the canoe. A man who has been handling the plant may not cook turtle, for the meat would be "bad," i.e., uneatable. The same thing would happen if turtle meat accidentally came in contact with a piece of the plant. All this applies only to the green creeper, and not to the fibre after it has been properly prepared and dried. The fibre itself is used for binding the heads of turtle-harpoons, so it is evidently regarded as harmless.

If a piece of the *Anadendron* creeper were burnt in the fire the natives believe that it would drive all the turtle away from the neighbourhood, or, according to another statement, that there would be a great storm.

So far we have considered the properties of the plant only in

[1] In preparing the fibre, the skin or bark of the young shoots of the plant is torn off in strips and these are placed on the thigh and scraped with a *Cyrena* shell.

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use it is in the fully strung position, and at all other times it is kept in the half-strung position. 411

It is clear that the North Andaman bow depends on a principle that is not made use of in the South Andaman bow, which we may state by saying that if a piece of wood be subjected to the influence of heat and smoke while it is bent in one position it will acquire greater strength and elasticity to react against a strain that bends it in the opposite direction. When the bow is fully strung it is S-shaped. When it is drawn the greater part of the strain falls on the lower portion where it is curved outwards. It is this portion of the bow that is strengthened by seasoning. 411 823

The North Andaman bow is very much lighter than the South Andaman bow and is much more elastic. I always found it very difficult to shoot with a South Andaman bow, but on the other hand I found the North Andaman bow very easy to use. In drawing it only a slight pull is required in order to send an arrow with considerable velocity. The disadvantage of the northern bow is that, owing to its slighter build, it does not last very long, and is liable to be broken. However, it only takes a man a few days to make a new bow, string included, and the very definite superiority of the North Andaman bow over that of the South Andaman amply compensates for its shorter life. 411

Bows of exactly the same shape but of smaller dimensions are made in the North Andaman for boys, the length varying from about 90 cm. to about 120 cm. For very small boys toy bows of a different pattern are made. The bow is formed of a piece of wood about 90 cm. long and from 2 to 2·5 cm. broad in the middle. The section in the middle is convexo-convex, with a high degree of convexity on the outside and a much slighter convexity on the inside. The bow tapers to a point at each end, but it tapers more gradually at the top than at the bottom. The bow-string is a simple piece of string (two-ply) made of *Anadendron* fibre. It is tied to the lower end of the bow at a distance of 1·5 to 3 cm. from the end, and at the top it is tied at from 4 to 7 cm. from the end. The shape of a toy bow of this kind as seen from the side is shown in Fig. 14. It is not S-shaped, like the toy bow of the South Andaman previously described, but the curvature is asymmetrical.

I obtained a specimen of a toy bow made of bamboo. Unfortunately there was no string, but it was probably intended to be strung in the fashion of the North Andaman toy bow just described. The outer surface of the bamboo was the outside of the bow, with the result that in section the inner side of the bow was more convex than the outer

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133 2,400 feet, situated in North Andaman, and visible at a distance of 60 miles.

2nd. *Narcondam*,[1] a small hilly island, containing an extinct volcano, with an elevation of 2,330 feet, lying about 70 miles east of North Andaman.

3rd. *Barren Island*, 75 miles S.S.W. of *Narcondam*, and about 42 miles east of the nearest island of the Great Andaman group, from no portion of the coast of which is it visible. It contains an active volcano, the height of which is about 1,015 feet.

[501] 2. Until recent years[2] the first only of these was known to the aborigines, probably owing to the circumstance that they, at least the natives of Great Andaman, have never been seen to venture far out to sea in their frail and clumsy canoes. The name borne by this hill is *Pū·luga lâ·kà bang-* (*lit.* Creator his mouth), referring apparently to its size and inaccessibility, and to a large ravine running down its side. There is also a belief that Saddle Peak was the place of *Pū·luga-'s*[3] residence prior to the deluge.

823 825 3. The formation of rocks, valleys, hills, &c., they attribute to the will of *Pū·luga-*, but they assign the sources of the streams containing oxide of iron, *kòi·ob-chā·lnga-*, and the olive-coloured mineral, *chū·lnga-*, to the action of a poisonous snake, called *lâ·raba-*, well known to them.[4]

103 4. The names they give to the natural forms of land and water are as follows:—

Cape (point)—*tô·ko-chô·ronga-* [*chô·ronga-* = nose].
Isthmus—*tô·to-kī·nab-* [*kī·nab-* = waist].
Mountain—*bô·roin-*.
Valley—*pâ·rag-*.
Strait—*teg-pâ·rag-*.
Coast (shore)—*tgô·ra-* [*gō·ra-* = strong].
Fore-shore—*kē·wad-* and *bô·roga-*.
Island—*tàrchô·na-*.
Islet—*tōt-kai·cha-*.
Harbour—*elàrū·la-*.
Bay—*kō·bunga-*.
Creek—*jīg-*.[5]

[1] The probable derivation of this name will be given in Part II.

[2] Since amicable relations have been established with the South and Middle Andamanese, several members of these tribes have visited Barren Island by accompanying us in the station steamer The name by which it is now known to them is *mâla-tàrchô·na-* (*lit.*, Smoke Island), in allusion to the smoke which is almost always to be seen rising from the volcano, and which they account for by saying that it must be due to a fire which *Pū·luga-* kindled.

[3] *Pū·luga* represents to them The Creator. *Vide* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 7.

[4] *Vide post* "Superstitions," paragraph 21.

[5] The legendary belief regarding the formation of creeks will be found under "Mythology."

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802 **Arithmetic.**—1. The utter hopelessness of obtaining from the aborigines any correct idea of the population of the tribes individually and collectively will be readily understood when it is stated that the only numerals in the language are those for denoting "one" and "two," and that they have absolutely no word to express specifically any higher figures, but indulge in some such vague term as "several," "many," "numerous," "innumerable," which seem to convey to their minds an approximate idea of the number intended, but fail to satisfy the requirements of the statistician.[1]

2. When anxious to express a certain small number with exactness, as, for example, nine, the nose is tapped with the tips of the fingers in successive order, and, commencing with the little finger of either hand, "*ū·ba-tū·l-*," (one) is said; with the next finger "*ūkpô·r-*" (two), after which with each successive finger "*ɑn-kā·*" (and this) is uttered. When the forefinger of the second hand is reached both are held up, and, the thumb of the second hand being clenched, the necessary number of digits is exposed to view, whereupon the word "*àrdū·ru-*" (all) is pronounced.

3. If ten be the number in question—and this is the highest numeral they attempt to indicate by this or any other method—on reaching the thumb of the second hand, both hands, before being held up, are brought together and then is said, as in the former case, "*àrdū·ru-*."

4. To express "one," they hold up the forefinger of either hand and utter the word *ū·ba-tū·l-* or *ū·ba-dō·ga-;* to denote "two" they hold up the first two fingers and say "*ūkpô·r-*."

5. The toes are never used in counting, nor are pebbles, grains, or notches in a stick ever so employed. When it is stated that only the more intelligent are in the habit of computing by even the primitive method I have here described, it is somewhat remarkable to find that their system of denoting ordinals is more comprehensive, as will be seen by reference to Appendix E.

•823 6. Before their comparatively recent acquaintance with us, they had not the faintest knowledge of the existence of even the

[1] With regard to human beings, to express a small number, say, from 10 to 20, *àrdū·ru-* would be used, while a somewhat greater number would be implied by the use of *jeg-chàu·-* (*lit.*, collected body), and a still greater assemblage, say of 50 persons, by *jī·baba*, beyond which number *at-ū·baba*, would be used. These words may be translated in a rising scale as follows:—

àrdū·ru-, several; *jeg-chàu·-*, many; *jī·baba*, very many; *at-ū·baba* (or *ū·baba*), innumerable.

As regards animals and inanimate objects the words *àrdū·ru-* implying many, and *ōt-ū·baba* (or *ū·baba*), innumerable, are generally used, and sometimes *jī·baba*, denoting very many.

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neighbouring coast of Burmah, much less of the world at large, and consequently imagined that their islands formed almost the entire terrene area, and that they themselves comprised the bulk of the inhabitants.

7. The few voyagers who from time to time ventured near their shores were regarded as deceased ancestors, who, by some dispensation, had been permitted to re-visit the earth, and who were supposed to live on some small island in the vicinity of their *ē·rema-*, *i.e.*, world. In confirmation of this may be cited the name by which natives of India are to this day called, viz., *chàw·gala* (*lit.* departed spirits).

Etymology.—1. From the following list of some of the numerous encampments of the natives of South Andaman,[1] it will be observed that the names are usually derived from some circumstance peculiar to the spot, or from some tree overshadowing the site:—

.tâ-bô·roga-, coral (*tâ-*), shore (*bô·roga-*).
.tigbang-, rock-hole, there being at that place a hole in a large rock through which a canoe can pass.
.tàrmū·gu-.[2] West (island).
.yū·kala-chàng-, grassy (*yū·kala-*), camp (*chàng-*).
.dū·mla-paicha-òng-, anchorage (*òng-*), in neighbourhood (*paicha-*), of the (*la*), *Dūm-* tree.
.lē·kera-bar·nga-, a row (*bar·nga-*) of *Lēkera-* trees.
.ū·dala lâr chū·lnga-, the spring (*chū·lnga-*), at the (*lâr*, *lit.* of the) *.ū·dala-* tree (*Pandanus verus*).
.chē·la- dô·k·nga-, the dragging (*dô·k·nga-*) of the ship (*chē·lewa-*). A ship was once wrecked there.
.būd lōt deg·ranga-. Defeat camp; the defeat (*deg·ranga-*) at the (*lōt*, *lit.* of the) camp (*būd-*). There was once a severe fight there.

2. There are a few place-names which are unintelligible to the present inhabitants, *e.g.*, *.lū·rwa-*, *.tū·rubūn-*, though it is believed that they conveyed a meaning to former generations. Many of the names show an old, but unmistakable form of the present language, while others, again, might be judged to be of recent adoption, but they are not so in point of fact.

Tribal Communities.—1. It is no matter of surprise that, during the *first* years of our present occupation, when our acquaintance with the Aborigines was so limited, we should

[1] A fairly complete list of the names of these encampments, and the meanings of the greater number of them, will be found in a short paper, entitled "Note on two Maps of the Andaman Islands," by E. H. Man and R. C. Temple, which was published in the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," 1880.

[2] *Vide* "Astronomy," paragraph 5. (*West*, the disappearing face place.)

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821 776 262 roots, another deluge would be the consequence, for *Pū·luga-* is supposed to require these for his own consumption at that period of the year; the restriction, however, does not extend to the *fallen* seeds of the *Entada pursætha*, which may be collected and eaten at any time with impunity.

821 776 789 13. Another of the offences visited by *Pū·luga-* with storms is the burning of beeswax,[1] the smell of which is said to be peculiarly obnoxious to him. Owing to this belief it is a common practice secretly to burn wax when a person against whom they bear ill-will is engaged in fishing, hunting, or the like, the object being to spoil his sport and cause him as much discomfort as possible; hence arises the saying among them, when suddenly overtaken by a storm, that some one must be burning wax.

776 821 787 14. The rainbow is regarded as *ē·rem-chàu·gala's* dancing or sounding board, which is only visible at certain times; its appearance is said to betoken approaching sickness or death to one of their number, and is, therefore, inauspicious.[2]

823 776 15. There are no superstitions anent hills, valleys, rocks, &c., which, as stated in my last paper,[3] *Pū·luga-* is believed to have formed for some purpose of his own. The formation of creeks is attributed to a fortunate accident, the account of which being connected with their traditions must be reserved for that section.[4]

823 775 16. They imagine earthquakes to be caused by some mischievous male spirits of their deceased ancestors, who, in their impatience at the delay in the resurrection, combine to shake the palm-tree on which they believe the earth to rest, in the hope thereby of destroying the cane bridge[5] which stretches between this world and heaven, and alone maintains the former in its present position. These selfish spirits are, however, said to be careful never to indulge in such practices during the dry months, as they imagine that, in consequence of the surface of the earth being then much cracked with heat, there would be considerable risk of its tumbling about their ears and crushing them instead of toppling over in one solid mass. They are said, therefore, never to play at earthquakes except during, or shortly after, the rainy season. But for the intervention of female spirits, who do their utmost to dissuade or prevent their male companions from continued enjoyment of this dangerous pastime, they are persuaded that there would be much cause for alarm on every occurrence of an earthquake.

775 17. They believe that every child which is conceived has had a

[illegible] "Death and Burial," paragraph 4, footnote).

[1] The Chippeway Indians call it the dancing spirit (*vide* "Travels in the Interior of North America," by Maximilian, Prince of Wied).

[2] *Vide ante* "Topography," paragraph 3.

[3] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraph 13.

[4] *Vide post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 25.

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to give him so uncomfortable a reception. Their immunity from harm on these occasions has given rise to some joking at the expense of the luminary in question, for, during the continuance of the eclipse, they shout in inviting tones to the hidden orb as follows:—*.ō·yar-, la den bal·ak ban lē·be ng'ĭdō·ati! dō·ati! dō·ati!*[1] (O moon, I will give you the seed of the *bal·ak!* show yourself! appear! appear!)

20. This seems to explain the custom which Colonel Symes describes as adoration to the sun and moon, for, as has been stated, no traces of worship or forms of religion, in the common acceptation of the term, exist among these tribes.

21. A solar eclipse alarms them too much to allow of their indulging in jests or threats, &c.: during the time it lasts they all remain silent and motionless, as if in momentary expectation of some calamity.

22. The world, exclusive of the sea, is declared to be flat and to rest on an immense palm-tree (*Caryota sobolifera*) called *bâ·rata-*, which stands in the midst of a jungle comprising the whole area under the earth. This jungle, *.châ·itâ·n-* (Hades), is a gloomy place, for, though visited in turn by the sun and moon, it can, in consequence of its situation, be only partially lighted: it is hither the *spirits* (*chàw·ga-*) of the departed are sent by *Pū·luga-* to await the Resurrection.

23. No change takes place in *.châ·itâ·n-* in respect to growth or age; all remain as they were at the time of their departure from the earth, and the adults are represented as engaged in hunting, after a manner peculiar to disembodied spirits. In order to furnish them with sport the spirits of animals and birds are also sent to *.châ·itâ·n-*, but as there is no sea there, the *chàw·ga-* of fish and turtle remain in their native element and are preyed upon by *.jū·ru-win-*. The spirits (*chàw·ga-*) and souls (*ōt-yō·lo-*) of all children who die before they cease to be entirely dependent on their parents (*i.e.*, under six years of age) go to *.châ·itâ·n-*, and are placed under a *ràu-*[2] (*Ficus laccifera*) on the fruit of which they subsist. As none can quit *.châ·itâ·n-* who have once entered, they support their stories regarding it by a tradition that in ages long past an *ôko-paĭ·ad-*[3] was favoured in a dream with a vision of the regions and of the pursuits of the disembodied spirits.

24. Some of their legends, as will be seen elsewhere,[4] appear to bear out the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, as

[1] This is said derisively, for, although these seeds are largely consumed by the pigs, the aborigines themselves do not consider them fit for food.

[2] *Vide ante* "Superstitions," paragraph 17.

[3] *Vide ante* "Magic and Witchcraft," paragraph 1.

[4] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraphs 15, 16, 29.

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821 *el·a-ē·rnga-*, or *kâ·la-ē·rnga-*, ebb tide.
nô·ro-, neap tide.
tó·ya-,[1] low tide at daybreak.

823 5. The four cardinal points of the compass are distinguished; the names indicating these are not derived from prevalent winds, but, as far as the east and west are concerned, have reference to the sun, the word for the former signifying "the appearing face place" (*elârmū·gu-*), and for the latter "the disappearing face place" (*târ-mū·gu-*); the term for south is the "separate place" (*el-iglā·-*), while the meaning and derivation of that denoting north (*elâr-jan·a-*) is unknown to the present inhabitants.

821 6. For the winds, too, they have distinctive names, viz.:

châl-jō·tama-, north-west wind.
Pū·luga-tâ-, north-east wind (lit., "The Creator His wind").
dē·ria-, south-west wind.
chī·la-tâ-, south-east wind.

Of these the second (*Pū·luga-tâ-*) only, now-a-days, possesses any special significance; it is called "The Creator's (or God's) wind," because it proceeds from that part of heaven where the connecting bridge[2] between this world and the next is supposed to be situated.

7. They identify three forms of clouds, and indicate them thus:

tó·wia-, cumulus.
ara-mū·ga-bar·nga-, stratus.
yūm-li-dī·ya-, nimbus.

8. Of all the stars and constellations Orion's belt alone is found to bear a name (*bē·la-*), but this is not to be wondered at, as they never venture upon any distant voyages, and do not therefore experience any necessity for studying the bearing of the various planets and constellations at different seasons, or for distinguishing them by name. Their astronomical observations have, however, extended to the discovery of the milky way, which they call *ig-yō·lowa-*[3], and poetically describe as the road used by the angels (*mó·rowin-*).[4]

434 **Trade, Exchangeable Values and Property.**—1. It is evident, from the accounts of various writers, that for many years prior to our present occupation, these islands were visited by trading vessels manned by Malays, Burmese, and Chinese, who were *said* to traffic with the Andamanese for edible birds'-nests and *béche de*

[1] *Vide post* "Hunting," paragraph 39 (footnote).
[2] *Vide ante* "Religious Beliefs," &c., paragraph 25.
[3] The Chippeways call the milky way "the path of the ghosts" (*vide* "Travels in the Interior of North America," by Maximilian, Prince of Wied).
[4] *Vide ante* "Religious Beliefs," &c., paragraph 9.

3: Temple G-5 [(1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

181 weakly or the helpless and to captives, kind to their wives and proud of their children, whom they often over-pet; but when angered cruel, jealous, treacherous and vindictive, and always unstable. They are bright and merry companions, talkative, inquisitive and restless, busy in their own pursuits, keen sportsmen and naturally independent, absorbed in the chase from sheer love of it and other physical occupations and not lustful, indecent or indecently abusive.

As the years advance they are apt to become intractable, masterful and quarrelsome. A people to like but not to trust. Exceedingly conservative and bound up in ancestral custom, not amenable to civilization, all the teaching of years bestowed on some of them having introduced no abstract ideas among the tribesmen, and changed no habit in practical matters affecting comfort, health, and mode of life. Irresponsibility is a characteristic, though instances of a keen sense of responsibility are not wanting. Several Andamanese can take charge of the steering of a large steam launch through dangerous channels, exercising then caution, daring and skill though not to an European extent, and the present dynamo-man of the electric lighting on Ross Island is an Andamanese, while the wire-man is a Nicobarese, both of whom exhibit the liveliest sense of their responsibilities, though a deep-rooted unconquerable fear of the dynamo and wires when at work. The Nicobarese shows, as is to be expected, the higher order of intellect. Another Andamanese was used by Portman for years as an accountant and kept his accounts in English accurately and well.

The intelligence of the women is good, though not as a rule equal to that of the men. In old age, however, they frequently exhibit a considerable mental capacity which is respected. Several women trained in a former local Mission Orphanage from early childhood have shown much mental aptitude and capacity, the "savagery" in them however only dying down as they grew older. They can read and write well, understand and speak English correctly, have acquired European habits completely, and possess much shrewdness and common sense: one has herself taught her Andamanese husband, the dynamo-man above mentioned, to read and write English and induced him to join the Government House Press as a compositor. She writes a well expressed and correctly spelt letter in English, and has a shrewd notion of the value of money. Such women, when the instability of youth is past, make good "ayas," as their men-kind make good waiters at table.

The highest general type of intelligence yet noticed is in the Jarawa tribe.

805 **Mental Capacities.**—The Andamanese divide the day by the position of the sun and can roughly divide the night, though they have no idea of steering
● 823 by the sun or stars. The year is known by the three main seasons of the
821 climate and the months rudely by the flowering and fruiting of trees of economic value to them. Tides are understood and carefully noted, a necessary accomplishment to a people largely living on shell-fish and navigating shallow tidal creeks and shores. They are aware of the connection of the phases of the moon with the tides and have names for the four phases of each lunation. They know the four quarters of the compass in reference to the daily position of the sun and have names for the four chief winds that blow (N. W., N. E., S. E., S. W.). They differentiate three kinds of clouds:—Cumulus, stratus, nimbus. The only constellation they have distinguished is Orion and they have discovered the Milky Way for which they have a name, and also call it "the way of the angels" (*eremoein*, the daughter-messengers of Puluga).

576 **Social Emotions.**—The social emotions are not generally expressed. The Andamanese have no words for ordinary salutations, greeting or for expressing thanks. On meeting they stare at each other for a lengthened period in silence, which the younger breaks with a commonplace remark and then follows an eager telling of news, which an Andamanese always delights in hearing. Relatives however sit in each other's laps, huddled closely together at *meeting*, weeping loudly and demonstratively, and after a long separation this may last for hours. The Onges are less demonstrative and on such occasions shed a few silent tears only and caress each other with their hands. At *parting* they take each other by the hand and blow on it, exchanging sentences of conventional farewell.

Undemonstrative though they are, the Andamanese are readily roused to emotion, finding that difficulty in separating the real from the assumed observed

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike – both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy; an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtâ of Tambĕ-ĕ-buiĕ, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor